

Land of Enchantment



*White Sands National Park
(Getty Images)*

In New Mexico, you'll feel a connection between humans and the landscape that stretches back thousands of years.



There's a spot in southern New Mexico where you can stand in the middle of a never-ending sea of glittering white, even on a summer afternoon. There's nothing visible for miles around besides the white sand under your feet, the brilliant blue sky above your head and the dark smudge of distant mountains on the horizon.

Modernist artist Georgia O'Keefe, who called New Mexico home, said "I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way... things I had no words for." Perhaps you'll feel the same about this land as you drive through the high desert from El Paso, Texas, nestled on the border, to Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona.

In El Paso, wander through two of the oldest-operating missions in the country. Go deep underground to explore geological history at Carlsbad Caverns. Just past the edge of White Sands National Park, you'll find the site where the first atomic bomb was dropped in 1945. Near Los Alamos, you can walk in the footsteps of Ancestral Puebloans at Bandelier National Monument. Everywhere you look, you'll find connections stretching back thousands of years between people and this land. But it's not all ancient history. You'll find vibrant communities of mountain bikers, vineyards producing exciting wines and the Indigenous people of the region still living in harmony with the land today.

At every bend in the road, you'll find another story to uncover and leave you feeling, well, enchanted.

PHOTOS: Hiker at Franklin Mountains State Park (Courtesy Visit El Paso), Bandelier National Monument (Shutterstock)





Canyon to see into Mexico and three states. Hike south to north to use chain assists on your ascent rather than your descent.

Watch climbers from all over the world scale rocks and view Native American art at [Hueco Tanks State Park & Historic Site](#). Because the park limits the number of cars entering, reserve your entry spot in advance by calling 512-389-8911.

For fantastic off-road desert riding, head to [Red Sands](#) west of Hueco Tanks State Park & Historic Site. Go on a guided or self-guided tour at Rent a UTV Off-Road Adventures at the Red Sands entrance. Later, stop at nearby [Cattlemen's Steakhouse](#) at Indian Cliffs Ranch for dinner.

Local legend has it that the margarita originated in the area, although some towns in Mexico also lay claim to being the birthplace of the tequila-infused cocktail. Along [El Paso's Margarita Trail](#), you'll find massive margaritas, including the Jalapeno Margarita with cilantro, at [Julio's Mexican Restaurant](#). [L&J Cafe](#), a longtime local landmark serves classic margaritas with Tex-Mex enchiladas that will keep you coming back. The industrial [Cantina Malolam](#) puts fresh mint, hibiscus and limes in their Mint Jamaica Margarita.

Learn more at [VisitElPaso.com](#) or at *The Union Depot Visitor Information Center, 400 W. San Antonio.*

PHOTOS: Aztec Trail, UTV Off-Road Adventures at Red Sands, Hikers at Hueco Tanks State Park & Historic Site (Visit El Paso)

Adventure Land

By Tori Peglar

Because El Paso, Texas, sits on the border of the United States and Mexico, there's a fusion of vibrant cultures, rich history and diverse landscapes that collide to make the city the place it is today. We've picked out outdoor adventures, boutique hotels and trendy restaurants for you to explore.

Stay in one of the city's boutique downtown hotels like [The Plaza Hotel Pioneer Park](#), [Stanton House](#) or [Aloft El Paso Downtown](#). Vegans will enjoy [Lick It Up El Paso](#), which has been featured on Food Network's *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*. [Elemi Cocina](#) sources organic and local produce, as well as heirloom varieties of native maize in Mexico for its inventive and flavorful tacos.



The 9-mile [El Paso Mission Trail](#) connects two of the nation's oldest continuously operated missions: Yselta Mission built in 1682 and Socorro Mission built in 1691. San Elizario Presidio Chapel is where a Spanish fort was built in 1789. The missions are stunning in their beauty and history.

Explore the Chihuahuan Desert landscape dotted with cacti, calliope hummingbirds and golden eagles at [Franklin Mountains State Park](#). Hike the easy 1.2-mile out-and-back trail to Aztec Cave. Very experienced hikers can hit the Ron Coleman Trail via McKelligon

Dear NATURE LOVERS,

SUNSHINE. PEAKS. WIDE-OPEN SPACES.
COME EXPLORE.

Love, El Paso

With the largest urban state park in the nation, our proximity to Big Bend National Park and more, El Paso's the clear choice for an amazing outdoor adventure.

- Franklin Mountains State Park
- Hueco Tanks State Park & Historic Site
- Big Bend National Park
- Guadalupe Mountains National Park



Uncrowded Park Gems

Base out of Carlsbad to explore Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains national parks.

By Tori Peglar

Use the crowds swarming larger national parks when you explore the spectacular Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains national parks.

Use the town of Carlsbad, N.M., as your base to explore Carlsbad Caverns just 18 miles away, as well as Guadalupe Mountains National Park, 40 miles across the New Mexico-Texas border.

In 1898, when 16-year-old cowhand Jim White first entered what would become Carlsbad Caverns National Park, the Texas-born teen discovered another world. Once part of a reef in an inland sea, Carlsbad Caverns has more than 119 limestone caves, including the Big Room, which is as large as six football fields. While it's disputed whether White was the first white settler to enter the caves, one thing is clear: this national park is stunning. And the good news is unlike White's days where people were lowered into the caves in guano buckets, there are elevators and stairs to access the caves today.

Forty-five minutes away lies Guadalupe Mountains National Park, which offers a rich palette of landscapes from pink blooming desert cacti to striking peaks, including the highest four peaks in Texas. Head to Pine Springs Visitor Center before choosing a trail to hike. For a challenge, gain 3,000 feet of elevation on the 8.5-mile, round-trip hike to the top of the 8,751-foot-



high Guadalupe Peak. Or take Devil's Hall Trail for a moderate 3.8-mile out-and-back path through steep canyon walls and past towering trees. For something short and easy-to-moderate, take the 2.3-mile Smith Spring Loop, which leads you to the verdant oasis of Smith Spring.

Then venture to Sitting Bull Falls Recreation Area, an hour outside Carlsbad. You'll discover a majestic 150-foot waterfall that plummets into natural pools, creating the perfect swimming holes.

In Carlsbad, rent a kayak or stand-up paddleboard to cool down in the calm waters of the Pecos River or stroll along five miles of paved riverside trails. You can also visit the Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, home to more than 40 species of animals and hundreds of species of plants native to the Chihuahuan Desert.

Learn more at DestinationCarlsbad.com.

PHOTOS: *Sitting Bull Falls* (Courtesy Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce), *grapes* (Despositphotos)

Where to Eat



From a food truck to a steak dinner in a vineyard, here's the best of Carlsbad.

- 1 Start the day off with an amazing breakfast in town at Pecos River Cafe.
- 2 Enjoy fine dining at YellowBrix Restaurant with the best patio in town.
- 3 Sip wine and enjoy specialty dinners at Balzano Vineyard.
- 4 Enjoy hand-crafted beer, food trucks and live music at Milton's Brewing.

Carlsbad Caverns National Park

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Funded in part by the City of Carlsbad Lodger's tax

Out of This WORLD

Stay in Alamogordo to explore White Sands National Park and discover incredible interactive space opportunities in town.

By Tori Peglar



New Mexico Museum of Space History
(Courtesy City of Alamogordo)

More than 275 square miles of glistening white dunes await you at White Sands National Park, one of our newest national parks as of Dec. 20, 2019. Stop in the park visitor center for its interpretive exhibits before setting off on Dunes Drive, an 8-mile one-way ride sprinkled with roadside exhibits, picnic areas, restrooms and trails. The first four miles of the road are paved and the last four are hard-packed.

Trails vary from short loops with interpretive signs, to long stretches of dunes where you follow red stakes in the sand. Catch the sunset tour with a ranger to learn about the wildlife and fauna of the park. The easy 1-mile walk travels over the dunes and ends in a picture-perfect spot for the sunset.

Then head to Alamogordo just 20 minutes away, which has its own gems for travelers to discover. The U.S. detonated its first atomic bomb on July 16, 1945 as a test at White Sands Missile Range, which surrounds the national park. Ever since, this area has been a center for scientific research. Look for the golden, cube-like building on the hill above town to visit the New Mexico Museum of Space History, which celebrates the nation's pioneers in space.

Learn all about space travel and see everything it involves from special toilets to food. Even the elevators are fashioned into space shuttle cockpits, and the bathrooms are themed after planets like Uranus—pun intended. Check out the *Living and Working in Space* exhibit that shows how humans have learned to survive in outer space. You'll see different space suits, a space toilet and even American and Soviet space food. Outside, visit the grave of Ham the Astrochimp, the first chimpanzee to go to space. People leave bananas and all sorts of treasures at its grave.

For happy hour, head to 575 Brewing Co., or Picacho Brewing Co., which shares space with Dick's Cafe. Beyond town, get a taste of the thriving wine and pistachio-growing scene. Sip wine on the Tuscan-inspired patio at Heart of the Desert, New Mexico's first and largest producing pistachio groves with about 13,000 trees. It offers a free guided walking tour. Or head to McGinn's PistachioLand for a motorized tour of its vineyards and pistachio orchards. Afterwards, sip wine in the tasting room or sample the pistachio bar. Don't miss the opportunity to be photographed next to the world's largest pistachio, a 30-foot nut made of concrete.

Learn more at AlamogordoNMTrue.com.

The bright side.



Alamogordo

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Journey Through Time

Set atop five mesas separated by beautiful canyons, Los Alamos is home to three lesser-known national park sites that will give you a fascinating look at the history of the Southwest.

By Mikaela Ruland

■ Valles Caldera National Preserve

Driving through the Santa Fe National Forest from Los Alamos, the first thing you'll start to notice as you approach Valles Caldera is the space between the trees growing farther and farther apart. Then, you'll come to the edge of the Valle Grande, a huge grassy expanse where you can often see some of the preserve's 3,000 elk grazing.

This now-dormant volcano last erupted 1.25 million years ago and created a 13-mile-wide depression. Stop at one of the pullouts to take in the views and spot elk or go for a hike on the 2-mile Valle Grande Trail.

For a different view of the caldera, head to Pajarito Mountain Ski Area, where you can ride the chairlifts on summer weekends to access tons of great hiking and views into the caldera from the top. Ask a lift attendant for directions to the "blue bench," a favorite spot of locals where you can relax and take in the views from a blue Adirondack-style bench.

■ Bandelier National Monument

Bandelier is filled with dwellings from the Ancestral Puebloan people tucked amongst



mesas and canyons. This unique site allows visitors to climb ladders, get up close to kivas and otherwise explore the remains of these ancient settlements at their own pace. The popular Pueblo Loop Trail is 1.4 miles and passes many of the most fascinating sites including Big Kiva and Long House, with an optional detour to Alcove House.

Be sure to get to Bandelier early in the morning, before the day gets hot and before the main area of Frijoles Canyon closes to private vehicle traffic, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., June through mid-October. Otherwise, head to the White Rock Visitor Center where you can ride a free shuttle to the monument. Explore for the morning and enjoy lunch at Sirphey, the park's full-service restaurant that serves great green chile cheeseburgers.

After spending the morning in Bandelier, explore the community of White Rock for the afternoon. Stroll the charming downtown and enjoy a late lunch or early dinner at Pig + Fig Café. Open 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., you'll find fun, French-inspired fare.

■ The Manhattan Project National Historical Park

Los Alamos became the town it is today during World War II when this part of the New Mexican desert became the perfect

location for a secret laboratory where the world's first atomic weapons would be built.

Rather than an enclosed park site, this historic park is the town itself. Head to the Los Alamos History Museum where you can take a guided walking tour which serves as a deep dive into the Manhattan Project.

Don't miss the Bradbury Science Museum on the Los Alamos National Laboratory's campus where the lab's main responsibility is still to safely steward the U.S.' nuclear stockpile. At the museum, you'll find interactive exhibits on the history of the nuclear arms race and the science behind atomic weapons, but you'll also learn how the lab's cutting-edge research has contributed to advancements in science on everything from climate change to combatting COVID-19.

Afterwards, head to Bathtub Row Brewing Co-op. The brewery serves some of the town's favorite beer with Los Alamos-themed names like Hoppenheimer IPA, after scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer.

Learn more at VisitLosAlamos.org.

PHOTO: Bandelier National Monument (Depositphotos)

Local Beta

By Mikaela Ruland

You could venture out onto Farmington's miles of trails, wilderness and cultural sights on your own, but if you're looking for a truly incredible experience, the best way to see Farmington is with a guide.

There are no trails through the other-worldly Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness just 45 minutes from downtown. Book a trip with Navajo Tours USA, a Diné-owned guide service that will lead you through the incredible badlands formations. Or, stop by the Farmington Visitor Center at 3041 E. Main Street for tips, directions and maps to help you prepare for a self-guided hike. The staff is well-versed in providing directions to iconic formations like the Egg Factory.

Looking to get your blood pumping? Stop by Sandstone Cycles at 5160 College Boulevard in Farmington to rent a mountain bike and take on the course of the country's longest-running mountain bike race, the Road Apple Rally. Access the 30-mile trail at Lions Wilderness Park & Amphitheater, which isn't too technical.

South of Farmington, is Chaco Culture National Historical Park, home to the buildings of the Ancestral Puebloan people. Join archaeologists for a tour with Journey into the Past. These extremely knowledgeable guides are stewards in their field and work to preserve ancient history. If you want an even more remote-feeling experience, you can take a tour through

Dinéah, the traditional homeland of the Navajo, where archaeologists will reveal evidence of the area's earliest inhabitants.

"We like to say that these rock art panels are Farmington's original art galleries," says Farmington CVB's assistant director Ingrid Gilbert.

You can't miss New Mexico's most famous dish while you're in town: chile. Served both red and green style, you'll find this Southwestern staple smothering burgers, mixed into mac and cheese, accompanying chile rellenos and more at The Chile Pod in Farmington.

Learn more at FarmingtonNM.org.



Alien Throne

Visit FarmingtonNM.org today and awake your thirst for adventure.

FARMINGTON  **N**

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Los Alamos is your Gateway to Three National Parks

Bandelier National Monument
Valles Caldera National Preserve
Manhattan Project National Historical Park

VisitLosAlamos.org

The “LOST” People

Archaeologists long wondered where Mesa Verde’s inhabitants went, but Tewa Puebloans knew all along.

By Mikaela Ruland



In 1200, more people lived in present-day Montezuma County, Colo., encompassing Mesa Verde National Park, than today. A flourishing society built villages into the cliffs and on top of the mesas. And then, by 1300, all evidence of people living there disappeared.

Studies show an extended drought may have played a role in pushing people out of the Mesa Verde region, in addition to societal issues like violence, politics and overcrowding. But for 100 years, archaeologists have argued over the answer to the question, “Where did they go?”

In the Tewa Basin, 250 miles south of Mesa Verde, the Tewa Puebloans already knew the answer. Their oral histories told of their journey from cliff-dwellers in the Montezuma Valley to their present-day home north of Santa Fe.

Archaeologists didn’t always consider oral histories valid in the same way they did material evidence. But one archaeologist, Dr. Scott Ortman, chose to follow the Tewa oral history to prove, with the support of turkey bones of all things, that the Tewas were Mesa Verde’s lost people. In addition to language, culture and facial structure similarities, Ortman and his colleagues found that the DNA from domestic turkey bones in Mesa Verde matched that of domestic turkeys in the Tewa Basin starting around 1300.

As Tewa Puebloans knew all along, Mesa Verde’s inhabitants didn’t disappear. They moved south and are still a vibrant and flourishing culture today.

Read more at www.mycoloradoparks.com/national-parks/mesa-verde-lost-people.

LOS ALAMOS

Living History

By Mikaela Ruland



Hovenweep National Monument
(Courtesy Mesa Verde Country)

Mesa Verde National Park's cliff-dwellings might get all the attention, but southwestern Colorado is full of archaeological sites. Spend a few days in the towns of Cortez, Dolores and Mancos to see other historical sites like Canyons of the Ancients and Hovenweep national monuments.

Stay at Canyons of the Ancients Guest Ranch, which has petroglyphs on-property and is just seven minutes from the national monument. Spend the day mountain biking Sand Canyon Trail in the monument, a 12-mile round-trip ride that will take you past ancient dwellings built into the red-rock walls. When the sun goes down, look up. This area has some of the country's darkest night skies.

Indigenous history and culture isn't limited to the past in this part of Colorado. Visit the Cortez Cultural Center to learn more about the Ute Mountain Ute, Pueblo and Navajo tribes through art installations, interpretive exhibits and weekly dances in the summer.

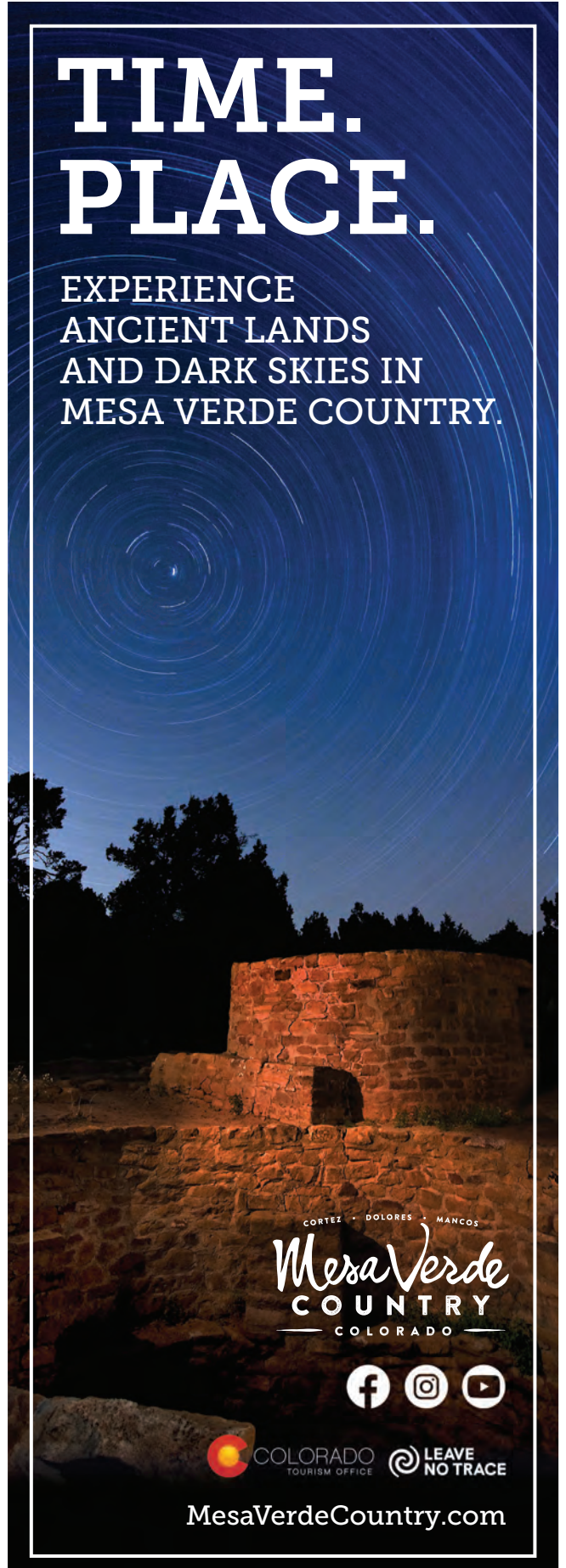
Southwestern Colorado is also home to a burgeoning craft beverage scene. Lush vineyards and orchards dot this part of the state, making it home to wine and hard cider producers. Try both at Fenceline Cider, tucked next to the Mancos River with food trucks and live music.

When you're ready for dinner, Cortez has a surprisingly vibrant dining scene. You'll find everything from creative locally-focused restaurants like the Farm Bistro, which has yak burgers and a relleno pie made with roasted poblanos on its menu, to Burger Boy Drive In, a retro spot complete with car hops.

Learn more at MesaVerdeCountry.com.

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WHOSE LAND AM I ON?

Think the Grand Canyon is “wild”? Think again. By Mikaela Ruland

When you look out over the Grand Canyon, the hustle and bustle of tourists milling about the rim fading as you take in the view, you might be tempted to think that this place looks pretty wild. While it's a common misconception, nothing could be further from the truth.

Dictionary.com defines wild as “uninhabited, uncultivated, or inhospitable.” It's tempting to look at the place just past where the pavement ends and want to see the antithesis of humanity. The vast canyon—its colors shifting as the sun makes its journey through the sky, the stoic pinyon pine seemingly impossibly perched on the canyon's edge, a crow soaring on the breeze, the ribbon of the Colorado deep down below; it all feels so far away from the places we call home. It feels so far away even from the

development of the South Rim: the shuttles and the parking lots and the families in line for the restroom.

From here, the canyon looks wild. But the reality is, people have been in this place for more than 10,000 years. Before the pyramids in Egypt or the Colosseum in Rome were built, humans were here in the Grand Canyon. And they've been here ever since.

If you look closely, the evidence of human history dating much farther back than the formation of the national park in 1919 can be found. When you hike down Bright Angel Trail, you're following in the footsteps of countless Indigenous people. Scan the walls for pictographs and petroglyphs. Rest at Indian Garden Campground and see a place that was farmed for generations. When you take a closer look, the canyon isn't wild at all.

While the evidence of humans in this place across history is more subtle than you might find in Europe, Asia or the Middle East, it's no less important to acknowledge that this place was someone's home long before the U.S. Government declared it a national park.

Like the rest of the United States, there is a long and sad history of Indigenous people being forced off their land in the Grand Canyon and across the Southwest. While we can't erase what's been done to the tribes of the Grand Canyon, as visitors we can make an effort to get to know the people who were here first and who continue to live here today.

Today, there are 11 federally recognized tribes associated with the Grand Canyon: the Havasupai, Hopi and Hualapai tribes, the Navajo and Yavapai-Apache nations, the Pueblo of Zuni and the Southern Paiute including the Kaibab, Las Vegas



Dine woman in a traditional dress on the rim of Grand Canyon (NPS)

and Moapa bands of Paiute Indians, the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah and the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe.

While the stories and histories of these people and their connection to the Grand Canyon are incredible, they are by no means relegated only to the canyon's past. People from the 11 associated tribes live vibrant lives in and around the Grand Canyon today. They are park rangers and river rafting guides and conservationists. Some live in the canyon, some live near the canyon and some live far away. They are as diverse and varied as the shades of color that stripe the canyon walls.

Like any culture, the histories of these people are vast. Justice cannot be done to thousands of years of history in a few paragraphs, but we hope this introduction to the three tribes that share borders with the national park will help get you started on your journey to learning more.

■ Havasupai Tribe

The Havasupai, meaning “people of the blue-green waters” have called this part of Arizona home for more than 1,000 years. The Insta-famous Havasu Falls, and the village of Supai, are on the Havasupai Reservation deep in a canyon that serves as a tributary to the Colorado River.

The Havasupai once lived all over what we now call Grand Canyon National Park and the surrounding area, their homeland spanning 1.6 million acres, which is the size of Delaware. In the winter, they lived along the canyon rim. In spring and summer, they farmed what is now called “Indian Garden” along the Bright Angel Trail.

In 1882, the federal government took control of the land on the canyon's rim and shrank the Havasupai's home to 518 acres deep inside the canyon. In addition to their homeland being stolen and having to learn how to live year-round inside the canyon, they also contended with food shortages and disease caused by increased white settlers in the area.

In 1975, the reservation was expanded to 185,000 acres, with an additional 95,300 acres managed by the National Park Service, but available for Havasupai use.

Today, approximately 400 tribal members live on the reservation at the bottom of the canyon, only accessible by foot, mule or helicopter, with tourism driving most of their economy.

■ Hualapai Tribe

The Hualapai (pronounced Wal-lah-pie) once hunted, traded and lived on more than 7 million acres of land in and around the Grand Canyon together with the Havasupai, the Yavapai and the Pai-Pai



Diana Sue Uqualla, representing the Havasupai People at Mather Point Landmark Dedication (NPS/Erin Whittaker)

people. There's archaeological evidence that the Hualapai's ancestors lived near the modern location of the Hoover Dam as far back as 600 A.D. The Hualapai gardened, built small rock dams and moved seasonally following the life cycles of wild plants. Their traditional lands are rich in red pigment, which they traded with other tribes.

In 1865, the Hualapai War broke out between the Hualapai and the United States. The Hualapai fought ardently to protect their lands and signed a peace treaty three years later. However, the prevalence of natural resources like copper, gold and uranium on Hualapai lands meant the peace deal didn't last for long. The U.S. Army removed the Hualapai from their lands and forced them to march almost 150 miles to a reservation on what is now the California-Arizona border. Starvation and sickness sent many fleeing back to their homelands, where tribal members petitioned the government for a reservation. Just 1 million acres along the western portion of the Grand Canyon was granted to them in 1883.



Pottery demonstration by Jason Nez, Archeological Technician (NPS/Michael Quinn)



Dan Akee, WWII Veteran, Navajo Code Talker (NPS/Erin Whittaker)

Today, around 1,300 Hualapai live on the reservation, many in the capital of Peach Springs. Their economy is heavily dominated by tourism, including Grand Canyon West. A visit to this part of the canyon is a must for many, thanks to the incredible architectural marvel that is the glass-bottomed Skywalk, along with helicopter and rafting tours. When you visit, don't let the fun keep you from learning more about these incredibly resilient people. Explore Eagle Point to see how the tribe traditionally lived, watch the Bird Singers perform their traditional dances and learn more about their history at the visitor center.

■ Navajo Nation

The Navajo Nation is the largest federally recognized tribe in the United States today—both in population and geographical area. While the current reservation isn't as large as their traditional homelands, the Navajo Nation encompasses 27,000 square miles to the east of Grand Canyon National Park including parts of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. These people, called the Diné (pronounced Dee-nay), migrated to the

Southwest sometime between 1400-1600 A.D., where they adopted cultural practices from other groups in the area. They transitioned from hunter-gatherers to farmers and then began to herd sheep and weave now famous blankets from their wool. They adopted silver working from the Spanish and make the gorgeous turquoise and silver jewelry that is now an integral part of the Southwest.

In the early 1860s, the U.S. Army, led by Colonel Kit Carson, led a scorched earth campaign against the Diné, destroying their crops and killing many of them. It ended in what was known as "The Long Walk" in 1864, where 9,000 Diné were forced to walk more than 300 miles to Fort Sumner, N.M.,

and were imprisoned. In 1868, a treaty was signed and the Diné were allowed to return to parts of their homelands on what is now the Navajo Nation.

In World War II, the famous "Navajo Code Talkers" enlisted in the U.S. military and evaded the Japanese using their own language. Navajo remains one of the most widely spoken Native American languages today.

Now days, the Navajo Nation's economy is diverse and relies heavily on mining and tourism. There are many iconic parks located on the reservation including Antelope Canyon, Canyon de Chelly and Monument Valley.

Learn More

There are many opportunities to learn more about the Indigenous people of the Southwest. In Grand Canyon National Park, head to the Desert View area where you'll find cultural demonstrations from tribal artisans most weeks throughout the summer. Visit Grand Canyon West, managed by the Hualapai Tribe, to learn more about their stories. As you visit all the beautiful places that the Southwest has to offer, pay attention to whose land you're on and what stories they have to tell about the past, the present and the future.

Even the light has something to say.



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Sunset over Pinetop-Lakeside (Courtesy SWG Media)

Recharge in the Pines

Connect with nature on the trails and lakes in Pinetop-Lakeside.

By Mikaela Ruland

When you get out of your car in the towering ponderosa pine forests surrounding the town of Pinetop-Lakeside, you'll feel much farther away from the desert than the few hours you just drove. At 7,000 feet in elevation, this mountainous escape feels light years away.

Take a deep breath.

"It's so quiet, but the trees make so many sounds in the wind," says marketing coordinator Annie DeRosier. "There's just a freshness up here, and the trees give off a really special scent."

The forest blends with civilization in Pinetop-Lakeside, making it easy to slow down and really enjoy nature. Rent a cabin at Lake of the Woods Resort at 2244 W. White Mountain Blvd., and you'll be sleeping under the trees, next to a private lake where you can canoe or kayak. You'll be able to easily access both the town's incredible trail system and dining and shopping even though you feel tucked away.

Start your day at Cycleological Coffee at 850 E. White Mountain Blvd., where you'll find great coffee, a cute backyard patio and breakfast burritos and sandwiches to fuel up. This bike-themed shop also sells gear like jerseys.

Set out on the Blue Ridge Trail, a 9.1-mile loop right in town that winds along a creek. You'll be hiking or biking through the forest and get an incredible sense of solitude, even though you're minutes from town and still have cell service—the best of both worlds. Wander just a section or the entire loop. If you're on a bike, you can join miles of other trails from here. The possibilities are endless.

Not traveling with your mountain bike? Rent from Pinetop Bike Shop at 857 E. White Mountain Blvd., where the staff can give you all the information about the best rides while you sip a cup of coffee from the coffee bar.

With a name like Pinetop-Lakeside, it's no wonder that this region has a shocking number of lakes for Arizona. Enjoy a stroll

around the 1-mile, paved, ADA-accessible Woodland Lake or rent a kayak from Skier's Edge at 560 W. White Mountain Blvd., to take a serene paddle.

For a really unique lakeside experience, visit June 23-25, 2023, for the 6th annual White Mountains Balloon Festival. Post up on the shores of Rainbow Lake in the early morning to see 20-plus hot air balloons do a splash and dash over the lake. The rest of the weekend is filled with concerts, food and retail vendors and an incredible evening balloon glow where the hot air balloons are inflated and lit, choreographed to music on the ground.

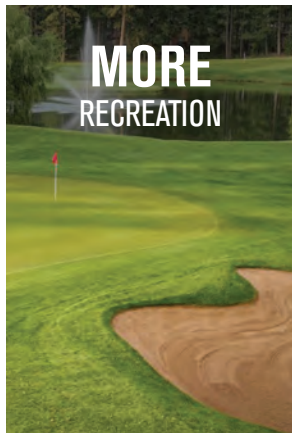
For a perfect end to your day, head to Wine Mountains Tasting Room & Wine Bar at 1746 E. White Mountain Blvd. to enjoy a glass of Arizona-produced wine and tapas like flatbreads and charcuterie.

Learn more at VisitPinetopLakeside.com or stop into the Visitor Center at 325 W. White Mountain Blvd.

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Trails of Treasures

Stop in Deming to search for gems and local lore, sip wine and visit a vibrant nearby Mexican town.

By Tori Peglar



If you want to experience nature and explore gorgeous landscapes, visit [City of Rocks State Park](#). Dotted by incredibly sculpted boulders, some reaching 40 feet high, this spot 30 miles from Deming offers a 5.1-mile round-trip hike up Table Mountain. Or, head to [Rockhound State Park](#). About 10 miles southeast of Deming, this park was the first in the nation to let visitors take rock specimens like jasper, quartz, geodes and crystals home with them. Look for all of these as you explore the park's three miles of hiking trails.

History buffs who want to discover ancient treasures and local legends should make their way to [Pancho Villa State Park](#) where Mexican revolutionary leader Pancho Villa raided Camp Furlong in Columbus, N.M., killing more than a dozen Americans in 1916. In retaliation, President Wilson sent troops to the border but failed to capture Villa. Today, you can camp here and see exhibits on this little-known piece of history.

At the [Luna Mimbres Museum](#), learn about the Mimbres Indians who lived in villages along the Mimbres River from about 950-1200 A.D. Exhibits spanning three buildings showcase what they left behind, including pottery painted with birds and other animals. The pottery inspired architect Mary Colter to design a line of high-end dinnerware in the 1930s that was used in Harvey Houses across the West. Buy the replica line in the gift store.

To sip wine produced in one of the nation's oldest wine-producing regions, head to [Luna Rossa Winery's tasting room](#). Founded in 2001, this winery is run by fourth-generation winemaker Paolo D'Andrea and his wife Sylvia D'Andrea. Raised in Friuli, Italy, Paolo D'Andrea's vineyards produce chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon, chenin blanc and more. The tasting room located at 3710 W. Pine Street is open every day. At [D.H. Lescombes Winery & Tasting Room](#), the Lescombes family has been making wine in the state since they moved from Burgundy, France, in 1981. On Fridays,

D.H. Lescombes Tasting Room in Deming offers live music and drink specials.

Near Deming, you can explore new worlds. While you can't climb into a shuttle and take off into space, you can sign up for a Final Frontiers Tour and ride the G-shock simulator at [Spaceport America](#). This is the world's first commercially licensed spaceport and is 1.5 hours northeast of Deming. Tours depart from Las Cruces or Truth or Consequences, N.M.

Or, travel internationally without boarding a plane when you drive 45 minutes to [Puerto Palomas de Villa, Mexico](#). Park your car in Columbus, N.M., bring your passport and walk across the border. The Pink Store is legendary for its authentic Mexican crafts and its chile rellenos served with menonita, a type of cheese made in the local Mennonite community.

Learn more about Deming at [DemingNMTrue.com](#).

PHOTOS: Grape picking, Geodes, Mural in downtown Deming (Courtesy of City of Deming)