

Los Caminos Antiguos

The Ancient Roads



5 Days/4 Nights/Optional Day Six

Gateway City: Alamosa, CO



It's a melting pot, with very diverse cultural richness dating back 11,000 years. A rare find even in America. History in the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area and along Los Caminos Antiguos "the ancient road" Scenic and Historic byway that traverses it, dates back to prehistoric Folsom Man hunting in the San Luis Valley. Around 1300, residents from the Colorado cliff dwellings visited, and Native American tribes have lived in the area for millennia. Fast forward closer to the present and you'll find the Spanish exploring in 1540, and famed explorer Zebulon Pike arriving in 1804. Hispanic settlers arrived in 1851 to settle San Luis, Colorado's oldest town. Mormons began arriving in 1875. They were joined by German, Dutch, and Japanese settlers, and more recently, the Amish. Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic and Historic Byway, a collection of traditional paths in the region, winds along the Upper Rio Grande River with views punctuated by 14,000 foot mountain peaks and the tallest sand dunes in North America. Today, sandhill cranes feed in the marshes, farmers still till the soil, and Mustangs roam free. Looking beyond the breathtaking scenery, historic adobe structures pepper the region, more than 50 murals adorn buildings, and some of Colorado's earliest history is on display. We've included as many of the varied cultural locations as we could squeeze in, so you can see for yourself where waves of settlers descended on newly formed towns to make a new life for themselves and their families, intermingled their beliefs and traditions in close knit communities, and continue to thrive today. A rare piece of American history just waiting to be explored.



Touring the Byway

DAY ONE

We recommend starting your journey in Alamosa, the start of the Los Caminos Antiguos. Take the Historic Alamosa Walking tour for an introduction to the town, and visit the San Luis Valley Museum and the Luther Bean Museum to learn more about the area. Enjoy the Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge for some outdoor time. Stay overnight in especially built studio apartments.

DAY TWO

This morning depart for Great Sand Dunes National Park, a 30 square mile sand dune field, the largest in North America, where both nature and history abound. Tours of the park with its many natural phenomena are available. At this writing,

the Trujillo Historic Homes National Historic Site and Medano Ranch are closed, but do check if they have reopened. A stay at the famed Zapata Ranch, a property of the Nature Conservancy, puts you in very unique accommodations.

DAY THREE

You can head for Zapata Falls today, before moving on to Fort Garland and the Fort Garland Museum and Cultural Center. Next up, San Luis, Colorado's oldest town. There, visit the San Luis Welcome Center, the Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center (if construction has been completed), the historic district, and the Shrine of the Stations of the Cross. A stay at the El Convento Inn puts you in completely unique accommodations in a converted convent.

DAY FOUR

It's off to Sanford to visit the Sanford Museum and Pike's Stockade, down a short dirt road, before reaching Antonito. Here, view Cano's Castle, and enjoy Antonito's Main Street with murals and historic buildings. The Conejos County Museum is currently closed, check if it has reopened. Stay at the Steam Train Hotel, convenient to the railroad.

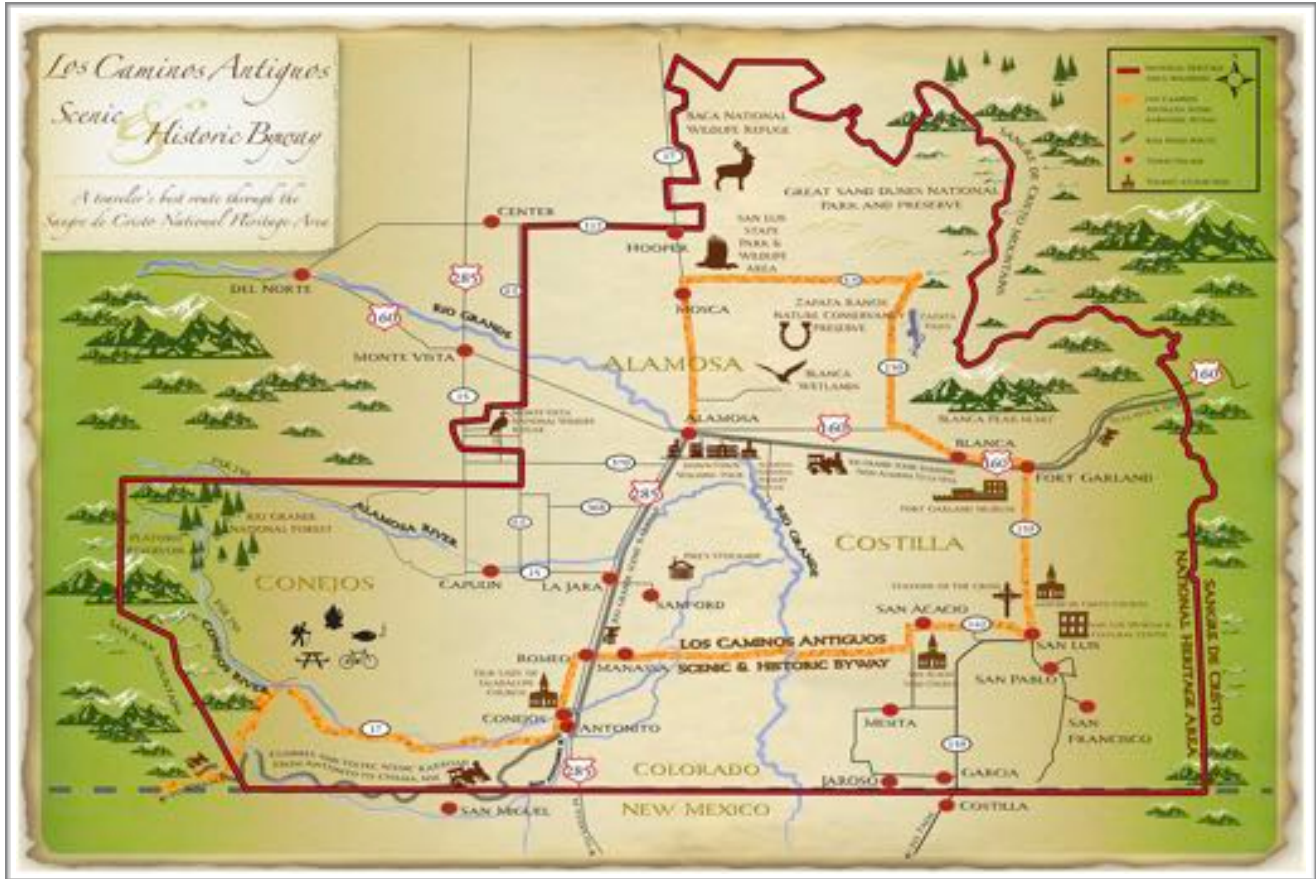
DAY FIVE

We've saved today for the Cumbres and Toltec Railroad excursion, which will encompass a full day with lunch on the 64-mile train journey.



OPTIONAL DAY SIX

Los Caminos Antiguos - the ancient roads - continued to Taos, New Mexico, and an optional Day Six let's you explore Taos. From there, we wish you safe passage if you are traveling another Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway, or a safe and pleasant journey home.



DAY ONE



Alamosa

Tucked between the San Juan and Sangre de Cristo Mountains, Alamosa immediately became a crucial hub for the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad. The town of just under 10,000 residents is a treasure trove of history and culture where early on, settlers created a tight knit community powered by agriculture. The small town charm will have you feeling right at home.

Alamosa Historic District Walking Tour

A walking tour of Alamosa's charming downtown historic district, which runs parallel to the railroad, takes you past red brick, pressed metal ornamentation, and glazed colored tile, all adorning late Victorian, Mission Revival, and Art Deco style buildings. The locations on the tour include the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Depot and an authentic Locomotive, the Post Office, the first public school, theaters, the Masonic Hall and Elks Lodge, plus a water tower and more. Tour begins at the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad Locomotive.

San Luis Valley Museum

Rather than just featuring artifacts, photographs, and collectibles, the San Luis Valley Museum makes early ranch and farm life in the area real with an early mercantile/general store, a model of post offices of years past, and a typical country grade school classroom, all depicting the town of Wayside Colorado on the Maddox Ranch. In addition to these exhibits, information about the areas Native Americans, Hispanic settlers, Japanese-American community, Adams State University, and early railroading is also on display.

401 Hunt Avenue, Alamosa, CO 81101 719-587-0667 Tu-Sat 10AM-4PM, Allow 1 hour, Adults \$5

Luther Bean Museum

The first permanent building at Adams State University holds a stunning collection of Southwest and European art, artifacts, Native American and Hispano Southwest arts, paintings and bronzes by nationally and regionally known artists, and European decorative arts.

208 Edgemont Boulevard, Alamosa, CO 81102 719-587-7151 M-F
1:30PM-4:30PM Free





Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge

Sitting at 7,800 feet above sea level and extending over 100 miles, the San Luis Valley is surrounded with three mountain ranges: Sangre de Cristo to the east, San Juan to the west, and the Saguache to the north. From the National Wildlife Refuge, which provides crucial feeding, resting, and breeding habitat for over 200 bird species and other wildlife in the valley, at sunset, the high peaks of the Sangre de Cristo take on a blood red glow which inspired the Spanish explorers to name the range “Blood of Christ.”

9283 El Rancho Lane, Alamosa, CO 81101 719-589-4021 Daily Dawn to Dusk



Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Bell Main Studio 104, 416 Bell Avenue, Alamosa, CO 81101 719-496-1869

The Sunset Inn 1310 West 8th Street, Alamosa, CO 81101, 719-992-2056 Local Inn with breakfast buffet.

Destination Distinctive Dining

The Rubi Slipper 506 State Street, Alamosa, CO 81101, 719-589-2641

Emma's Authentic Foods of the Southwest 924 Main Street, Alamosa, CO 81101, 719-992-2021

Calvillo's Mexican Restaurant 400 Main Street, Alamosa, CO 81101 719-587-5500

Colorado Farm Brewery (beverages only) 2070 Country Road 12 South, Alamosa, CA 81101 720-739-1168

Destination Distinctive Retail

Rocky Mountain Scrimshaw and Arts 5474 County Road 112, Alamosa, CO 81101 719-589-2108

Firedworks Gallery 608 Main Street, Alamosa, CO 81101 719-589-6064

Navajo Trail Antiques 12589 US Route 160, Alamosa, CO 81101, 719-580-4463

DAY TWO

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve

Few know that there is a 30 square mile sand dune field in North America and in this case, one wrapped in the rugged 14,000 foot peaks of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The tallest dunes in North America are the centerpiece of a diverse landscape that includes grasslands, wetlands, conifer and aspen forests, and alpine lakes. While exploring here, you can experience a starry sky on moonless nights, sand board or sled down the dunes and take a surreal walk on the dunes under bright full moonlight. Begin your visit with the short film on the history of the dunes and exhibits illustrating how the sand dune field was formed. You can also view the dune fields from the parking lot, explore Medano Creek and take a four wheel drive on a tour through the dunes.

11999 CO Highway 150, Mosca, CO 81146 719-378-6395 7-Day Vehicle Pass \$25

Park Tours

Authorized by the National Park Service, Kaiyote Tours offers birding, wildlife, night sky, hiking and backpacking tours in Grand San Dunes National Park and Preserve. For visitors who do not have a 4WD vehicle, one can be rented from Mountain Master Off-Road Tours, Pathfinders 4X4 or the Great Sand Dunes Lodge to drive the Medano Pass Primitive Road.



Great Sand Dunes National Park Historic Sites

In addition to the totally unique natural environment, Great Sand Dunes National Park and surrounds are filled with historic structures and stories. Buffalo soldiers were patrolling the area to protect the dunes and settlers in the remote area starting in 1876. The Volcanic Mining Company built a gold mine operation on Medano Creek in 1929. The 1940 Territorial Revival style Superintendent's Home is located adjacent to the gate house of the park. Traces of the Old Spanish Trail, which spans six western states can be found where the trail crossed Highway 150 and Country Lane 6 on the southern border of the park. Now, part of Zapata Ranch, owned by the Nature Conservancy, the Medano Ranch is one of the oldest continuously operating properties in the area. The original cattle driven in from Texas in the 1870s evolved into a huge ranching operation that was ultimately became the subject of modern ranching techniques implemented to ensure its survival.

Trujillo Homesteads National Historic Site (check if re-opened)

Just over 35 acres of the original Trujillo ranches are now part of the historic landmark that includes the 1879 historic ranch house, stable and corral built by Pedro and Sofia Trujillo. The Trujillo family originally settled in 1864 in an isolated area near the edge of the Great Sand Dunes. Patriarch Teofilo Trujillo made himself into one of the wealthiest ranchers in the area, ultimately owning about 1,500 acres. His son Pedro married an adopted daughter Sofia and turned himself into a respected cattleman. They became constant targets for violence and intimidation. After raising 18 children on the ranch, Sofia lived into the 1950s surviving harsh conditions and constant pressures to take away her land and livelihood. Hooper, Colorado





Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Zapata Ranch 5305 CO-150 Mosca, CO 81146 719.378.2356 Experience the upscale splendor of historic Zapata Ranch, an old stagecoach station turned sophisticated guesthouse with elegant southwest décor.

Great Sand Dunes Lodge 7900 CO Highway 150, Mosca, CO 81146 719-378-2900 Alternate lodging close to Great Sand Dunes National Park.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Enjoy a dinner while relaxing at Zapata Ranch.

DAY THREE

Zapata Falls

The falls at Zapata Falls are actually located in a cave. The trail to the area is an easy half-mile hike, but to get to the actual falls requires either wading through waters and maneuvering over rocks, climbing over the ice hills during the winter, or balancing on a log bridge during the summer, to avoid getting wet. If you don't want to tackle the hike, the views of the Great Sand Dunes from the parking lot are breathtaking.

Lake of the Falls Road, Monte Vista, CO 81144 719-852-7074 (BLM Field Office)



Fort Garland

Built to protect settlers in the San Luis Valley, Fort Garland was home to one of the oldest standing forts constructed during the Great Western Expansion of the 1860's. Although less than 500 people reside here now, there are a number of businesses in its downtown historic district, and creative types ranging from artists and painters to crafters and musicians.

Fort Garland Museum & Cultural Center

Manned by a garrison of over 100 men, Fort Garland was commanded by legendary frontiersman Kit Carson. Today, you can explore life in the 19th century fort, walk the parade grounds, and tour the original adobe buildings. Learn about the Buffalo Soldiers of the 9th Cavalry who were stationed at the Fort from 1876 to 1879 and discover Colorado's role in the Civil War. Exhibits also highlight the women and children who brought a bit of home to the fort.

29477 Highway 159, Fort Garland, CO 81133 719-379-3512 M-Sat 9AM-5PM,
Allow 2 hours, Adults \$7





San Luis

Boasting strong ties to Spain's religious, cultural, and artistic traditions, San Luis was a part of four Spanish land grants decreed by the King of Spain, populated by Hispanic settlers from the Taos Valley in 1851 to become Colorado's oldest continuously inhabited town. A church in the central village known as La Plaza Medio was built in honor of its patron saint San Luis de la Culebra. The town's adobe architecture and classic Spanish town layout illustrates the cultural influences that shaped many early communities of Southern Colorado.

San Luis Visitor Center

The Town Hall of San Luis, across the street from the pathway to the Shrine of the Stations of the Cross, also serves as the Visitor Center. Restrooms available.
408 Main Street, San Luis, CO 81152 719-672-3002



Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center (if construction complete)

The Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center, the centerpiece of the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area is home to the San Luis Museum, a Community Theater and Community Kitchen. It also features contemporary murals, historic “Santos” wooden carvings by local artists and a replica Morada, a place of worship before churches were built.

401 Church Place, San Luis, CO 81152 719-672-0999 F-Sun 10AM-4PM Free

Plaza de San Luis de la Culebra Historic District

The San Luis Historic District contains an important collection of buildings that include the County Courthouse, 401 South Church Place, the Convent and Church of Most Precious Blood, numerous residences, and the town's commercial core. The district also includes the La Vega Commons, one of two "commons" in the United States, the other being in Boston, and the San Luis People's Ditch, the oldest irrigation ditch in Colorado in continuous operation. A mural in the Post Office depicts San Luis as Colorado's oldest town.

Shrine of the Stations of the Cross: San Luis Bronze Sculptures

Sitting above La Mesa de la Piedad y de la Misericordia (the Hill of Piety and Mercy) in the center of town, the Stations of the Cross presents a series of ¾ size bronze statues at each of the 15 stations of the cross that represent the final hours Jesus Christ. Created by internationally known artist Huberto Maestas, the walk ends at the top at the chapel, La Capilla de Todos Los Santos (The Chapel of All Saints).

Sangre de Cristo Parish, San Luis, CO 81152 719-672-3685 24/7





Destination Distinctive Accommodations

El Convento Inn 401 E. Church Place San Luis, CO 81152 719-992-0122

A former convent of the Sisters of Mercy, the now Bed and Breakfast is owned by the Sangre de Cristo Parish.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Mrs. Rios Restaurant 124 Main St San Luis, CO 81152 719- 672-0211 Featuring Mexican, American, and Asian cuisine in a folksy atmosphere.

Destination Distinctive Retail

R&R Market 367 Main Street, San Luis, CO 81152, 719-672-3346 The oldest continuously operating business in Colorado, dating from 1857.

DAY FOUR

Sanford

The tiny town of Sanford was founded by Mormon pioneers moving into the San Luis Valley.

Sanford Colorado History Museum

Housed in the original 1937 Sanford Town Hall, over the years, the building has served as town offices, a venue for dances and social events, a band practice room, a fire department facility, library, temporary church, jail and a lookout tower during World War II to watch for enemy aircraft. All of the artifacts and collections have been generously donated by local residents.

770 Main Street, Sanford, CO 719-580-4114, Open by Appointment

Pike's Stockade

Located on the Conejos River, the stockade is a reconstruction of the log fortress built by US Soldiers who accompanied Zebulon Pike to the area in 1807. It marks the spot where Pike raised the American flag over then Spanish territory in the Southwest US.

22862 County Road 24, Sanford, CO 81151 719-379-3512 Dawn to Dusk





Lady of Guadalupe Parish

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, the oldest parish in Colorado, was originally built in 1858 of vertical logs lashed together and plastered with adobe. It was later replaced by the current church, a larger adobe structure with prominent bell towers, that encompasses the original building. A statue of Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe, brought by the first settlers to the area, sits above the entrance. 6633 County Road 13, Conejos, CO 81120 Daily 7:30AM-6PM, Allow 1 hour, Donations Accepted

Antonito

Antonito (Spanish for little Anthony) was founded by the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad before the first train arrived in 1880. It was soon settled by Hispanic farm families to support a sheep herding station. Visitors passing through gave rise to lodging, restaurants and shopping. Freight trains still run to carry perlite and lava rock from mines to the north. Antonio has not lost its authentic southwestern charm, which is carefully preserved in historic buildings like the headquarters of the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad.

Conejos County Museum & Visitors Center (if reopened)

The Conejos County Museum illustrates the multi-cultural heritage of the Ute Indians, Spanish explorers and Mexican ranchers who all called the area home.
5045 US Highway 285, Antonito, CO 81120 719-580-4070 Tu-F 9AM-5PM Free

Antonito Town Hall

The Warshauer Mansion built in 1912 by Fred Warshauer, a wealthy German immigrant. Even though he lived here only a short time, the pressed brick and stucco residence was finished with elegant woodwork from Iowa and several murals by Denver artist Jens Eriksen. The house, that was equipped with a central vacuum system, fire control, steam heating and an intercom at the time, now serves as the Antonito Town Hall.

515 River Street, Antonito, CO 81120



Antonito Murals/Historic Buildings

Antonito has the largest collection of murals in the area painted by Fred Haberlein, a local artist who grew up on a Conejos County ranch. You will find six along Main Street, others in the Post Office, Narrow Gauge Cafe and Motel, the Cristo El Rey Church, the People's Drug Store and the High School. Important structures in town include the 1925 Society for the Mutual Protection at 603 Main Street and the 1890 Palace Hotel.

Cano's Castle

Even though a portion of Cano's Castle has recently been damaged by fire, the towers, built out of scrap aluminum, still rise out of an otherwise unremarkable neighborhood of homes. Originally five separate structures enclosing thousands of square feet, the buildings were created out of wire, hubcaps, grills, screen doors, window casements, bicycle reflectors, and thousands of cut open beer cans turned inside-out and hammered flat to create aluminum siding. Drive By Only
5045 US Highway 285, Antonito, CO 81120





Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Steam Train Hotel 402 Main Street, Antonito, CO 81120 719-298-8908 Stay three minutes from the train.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Dutch Mill Cafe, 407 Main Street, Antonito, CO 81120, 719-376-2373

Dos Hermanos, 435 Main Street, Antonito, CO 81120, 719-376-5589

DAY FIVE

Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad

Save the whole day to ride the Cumbres and Toltec Railroad, a National Historic Landmark that is the most authentic steam railroad in North America. The 64 mile trip requires a bus trip in one direction or the other to enjoy the entire experience. Owned by both Colorado and New Mexico, the train crosses the state borders 11 times, zigzagging through canyons, passing through two tunnels, and steaming through spectacular western mountain scenery. From Antonito, travelers board a bus to Chama at 8:30 AM and return by train to Antonito at 4:40 PM. From Chama, travelers board a bus at 8:30 AM and return by train to Chama at 4:05 PM. From Antonito, travelers board the train at 10 AM and return by bus to Antonito at 5:30PM. From Chama, travelers board the train at 10AM and return to Chama by bus at 6 PM. Lunch is served on all trips.

5234 B US Highway 285 Antonito, CO 81120 719-472-3984 Adults starting at \$135 depending on car selected.



OPTIONAL DAY SIX



Taos

Don Fernando de Taos, established in 1780, is one of the oldest European settlements in New Mexico. Built around a traditional Spanish fortified plaza ringed by low adobe buildings, the town quickly outgrew its original defensive walls to become an important center for trade on the Santa Fe Trail. In the late 19th century, artists settled in and around the plaza leading to Taos' reputation as a world class arts location. Each period of history is evident in the Downtown Historic District, where Spanish Colonial Style residences stand side by side with Territorial, Mission Revival and Pueblo Revival style houses.

Enchanted Circle Scenic Byway

Since you are in Taos, you have the opportunity to drive the Enchanted Circle Scenic Byway, which circles 13,000 foot Wheeler Peak, the highest point in New Mexico. The route, which begins in Taos, travels for 83 scenic miles through mountains, valleys, a mesa, and forest land surrounded by absolutely captivating landscapes.

Historic Taos Plaza

The Plaza is the center of the Taos Historic District, and a centuries old center of local trade and gossip. Starting with a land grant from the King of Spain in 1796, homes were built in large quadrangles in fortress-like structures to thwart hostile raiders from entering the village. Sentries were stationed day and night and a huge gate was the only means of entry. The enclosure also served as a refuge for livestock at night and merchants displaying their wares during trade fairs.

Central Plaza, Taos, NM 87571 575-758-8234

Taos Pueblo

Taos Pueblo, a World Heritage Site and National Historic Landmark, is considered to be the oldest continuously inhabited Native American community in the nation. The ancestors of the Taos people lived in the Pueblo long before Columbus landed in America and hundreds of years before Europe emerged from the Dark Ages. The major buildings were likely built between 1000 and 1450 A.D. When the first Spanish explorers arrived in New Mexico in 1540, they believed the Pueblo was one of the fabled golden cities of Cibola. As a member of the Eight Northern Pueblos, Taos is one of the most private, secretive, and conservative. Residents almost never speak of their religious customs to outsiders and their language has never been written down.

120 Veterans Highway, Taos, New Mexico 87571 575-758-1028 M-Sat 8AM-4:30 PM, Sun 8:30AM-4:30PM, 30 minute tour on the hour; Adults \$16



Hacienda de los Martinez

The Hacienda de los Martinez is one of the few northern New Mexico late Spanish Colonial period, “Great Houses” remaining in the American Southwest. Built in 1804 at the terminus of the Camino Real, the fortress-like building became an important trade center. Today the Hacienda’s 21 rooms surrounding two courtyards provide the visitor with a rare glimpse of the rugged frontier life and times of the early 1800s. Regularly scheduled demonstrations present the traditions of northern New Mexico.

708 Hacienda Way, Taos, New Mexico 87571 575 758-1000 F, St, M, T
11AM-4PM Sun Noon-4PM, Allow 1 hour, Adults \$8

Kit Carson Home and Museum

Still standing on its original footprint, this house museum preserves the Spanish colonial style residence of frontier leader, Kit Carson, which he purchased as a wedding gift for his third wife, Maria Josefa Jaramillo. After their deaths 25 years later, the home changed ownership six times before it was purchased by the Grand Masonic Lodge of New Mexico as a perpetual memorial to Freemason Kit Carson. Kit Carson Road, Taos, NM 87571 575-758-4082 Daily 11AM-5PM, Allow 1 hour, Adult \$10





Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Hotel La Fonda de Taos 108 South Plaza Taos, New Mexico 87571 575-758-2211 In 1820, the first “La Fonda (Spanish for Inn) on the Historic Taos Plaza was a mercantile store that rented rooms. This version built later has earned a lasting reputation as one of the finest Taos hotels.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Old Martina’s Hall 4140 HWY 68 Ranchos de Taos, NM 87557 575-758-3003

A long time Taos pool hall given a major facelift by the current owner, serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner combining southwestern and European flavors.