# **New Mexico ~ Land of Enchantment**

Part 1: Heritage of New Mexico Albuquerque, Santa Fe, & Taos April 20 - 26, 2025 • 7 Days • \$2,550\*

Part 2: AVA Walking Convention & Southern New Mexico April 25 - May 4, 2025 • 10 Days • \$2,890\* \*\*

The biennial walking convention of the AVA – America's Walking Club is held in a remarkable corner of the American Southwest – the culturally, scenically, and historically diverse state of New Mexico.

The itinerary is offered in two parts.

During *Part 1: Heritage of New Mexico*, WAI draws on treasures discovered in preparation for our 20th anniversary celebration held in New Mexico back in 2009. This was the year we first became aware of New Mexico's well-earned nickname – "Land of Enchantment". Some of these treasures include:

- Jemez Mountain Trail, a scenic drive that takes in surprising geological formations, Puebloan ruins side by side with an early 1600 Spanish convent, a modern day Walatowa people pueblo, and remainders of the area's mining, and ranching heritage;
- the capital city of **Santa Fe** where the walk route abounds with echoes of this 415year-old city's Spanish past, blended with the ambiance of a world-renowned arts community;
- **Bandelier National Monument**, one of the best places to see cliffside dwellings of the Ancestral Pueblo people; and
- **Taos**, an old town with 17th century Spanish roots blended with a thriving artist colony in a splendid scenic setting near the stunning Rio Grande Gorge, dramatic profiles of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains providing the backdrop.

*Part 2: AVA Walking Convention & Southern New Mexico* is built around the convention in Las Cruses, exploring southern New Mexico with walks and activities between Albuquerque and El Paso, Texas. Highlights of Part 2 include:

- Very Large Array, a surreal collection of 27 oversized satellite dishes perched on the New Mexican desert in hopes of receiving radio signals from deep space;
- **Silver City**, one of many New Mexican Old West towns founded as a result of mining strikes in the late 19th century;
- Las Cruces and the AVA Convention, the heart of the itinerary and base of the biennial AVA walking convention; and
- **Truth or Consequences**, formally called Hot Springs, this ranching community and hot springs mecca changed its name in 1950 to match the uber-popular game show and hasn't looked back since.

\* **Overlap credit**: Travelers who participate in both Part 1 and Part 2 receive a credit of

\$150 due to the overlap night in Albuquerque. Those traveling on the single supplement receive an additional \$75 credit.

\*\* NOTE: Registration for the AVA Convention is not included in the WAI tour price. As information about registration for the AVA Convention becomes available, WAI will advise and prompt travelers who are registered for this WAI tour.

<u>Contact Us</u> **Tour Type:** Classic Curated, Volkssport

#### **Overview / Trip Details**

- <u>Part 1~Heritage of New Mexico</u>
- <u>Part 2~AVA Convention</u>

#### Heritage of New Mexico

# Including:

- All land travel as outlined
- Tourist-class or better hotel accommodations
- 9 meals: all breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 1 dinner as listed in itinerary (BLD)
- 4 walk routes as listed plus an optional walk on Day 1 for those arriving early
- Walking fees for all walks for those collecting AVA/Canadian Volkssport Federation credit
- WAI guide service throughout (2 guides)
- All tipping for coach drivers, any local guides, and group meals

• Pricing is based on double occupancy. A limited number of single rooms are available for a supplement of \$500. We also provide a roommate matching service for those interested.

# Activities/Visits to:

- Jemez Mountain Trail National Scenic Byway
- Jemez Historic Site
- Bandelier National Monument
- The High Road to Taos State Scenic Byway
- Enchanted Circle State Scenic Byway
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial Angel Fire
- Taos Pueblo
- Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway
- Tinkertown Museum
- ...plus more fun and interesting stops than we can list!

# **Optional Excursions:**

- Hot Air Balloon Experience Albuquerque (DAY 1)
- Old Town Albuquerque Walk (DAY 1)
- Sandia Peak Tram Albuquerque (DAY 1)
- Santa Fe Food & History Tour (DAY 3)

#### **AVA Walking Convention & Southern New Mexico**

# Including:

- All land travel as outlined
- Tourist-class or better hotel accommodations
- 12 meals: all breakfasts and 3 dinners as listed in itinerary (BD)
- 12 walk routes as listed (NOTE: Walk fees should be paid for through the AVA Convention registration fee, which is not included in the tour price)
- WAI guide service throughout (2 guides)
- All tipping for coach drivers, any local guides, and group meals
- Pricing is based on double occupancy. A limited number of single rooms are available for a supplement of \$575. We also provide a roommate matching service for those interested.

# Activities / Visits to:

- Very Large Array
- Catwalk Recreation Area
- City of Rocks State Park
- Deming Luna Mimbres Museum
- Dripping Springs Natural Area
- White Sands National Park

- El Paso, Texas
- Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park
- Truth or Consequences Fiesta

# **Optional Excursions:**

- Activities of the AVA Convention in Las Cruces (WAI guides will coordinate and provide transportation with the WAI bus, but travelers will register as individuals to choose from the ala carte menu of Convention walks and activities)
- 360.260.9393
- <u>Email Us</u>

# Itinerary

Click on each day for more details.

# Part 1: Heritage of New Mexico

DAY 1~APRIL 20: Arrive in Albuquerque, New Mexico

Walk #1: Optional Old Town Albuquerque Walk - 6/10 km, rated 1A

Travelers arrive into Albuquerque today for *Heritage of New Mexico*, Part 1 of the *Land of Enchantment* Adventure in the fascinating state of New Mexico.

The first official activity is a Welcome Orientation meeting this evening at our hotel after you have had dinner on your own in one of the nearby eateries.

Travelers who arrive a day early, on April 19, are welcome to consider a trio of only-in-Albuquerque outings.

NOTE: The Hot Air Balloon Experience and the Old Town Albuquerque Walk are both morning activities and therefore conflict with each other. Travelers may participate in one or the other in the morning plus the Sandia Peak Tram in the afternoon. Travelers who prefer to combine the Hot Air Balloon Experience with the Old Town Albuquerque Walk may do so by opting out of the Sandia Peak Tram excursion and using taxi or ride-sharing to travel between our hotel and the walk start point in Old Town.

<u>Optional Hot Air Balloon Experience</u>: Albuquerque is the hot air balloon capital of the planet. Every October the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta lights up the sky with a magical melee of hot air balloons. You can get a sampling of this wondrous aeronautical activity on a much more intimate scale this morning with a 1-hour hot air balloon Sunrise Flight above Albuquerque and the Sandia Mountains.

Estimated price: \$295 per person (assumes a minimum of 6 passengers), including transportation, balloon ride, and after flight snack.

<u>Optional Old Town Albuquerque Walk</u>: The local club offers an fun and easy walk featuring Old Town Albuquerque along with surrounding older neighborhoods with appealing southwestern architecture and vibe. In our opinion, the 6 km route is the more interesting walk. This is a morning activity.

Estimated price: \$15 per person, including transportation, WAI guide services, and walk credit.

<u>Optional Sandia Peak Tram</u>: The afternoon option takes us east to the Sandia Mountains. Albuquerque sits in high desert at around 5,000 feet above sea level. The ridgeline of the Sandia Mountains rises an additional 5,000 feet and Sandia Peak Tram is a dramatic, scenic, and effortless way to make the ascent.

Until recently, this tram was the longest in the world, and remains the longest in the Americas, transporting us nearly 3 miles up the mountainside. At the top, panoramic views span approximately 11,000 square miles. Depending upon weather, we may have a chance to do some hiking; in late April, however, snow is still likely to be lingering so we plan to soak in the views while enjoying a hot beverage and a snack in the TEN 3 Restaurant. Estimated price: \$80 per person, including transportation, tram tickets, WAI guide services, and a snack in the TEN 3 Restaurant.



#### DAY 2~APRIL 21: Albuquerque to Santa Fe (B)

Walk #2: Bandelier National Monument, 5 km, rated 2A Driving route: Jemez Mountain Trail National Scenic Byway

We leave New Mexico's largest city this morning to traverse a series of scenic byways over the next several days. Jemez Mountain Trail National Scenic Byway is a winding 2-lane road through Jemez Pueblo offering a rich connection with the Jemez people along with varied New Mexico landscapes.

On the first part of the drive, our bus winds between classic red rock formations of the high desert and flat topped mesas crowned with blue skies and towering cumulus clouds. The later part of the byway is a ribbon of road through extensive ponderosa pine forests opening up for views of expansive Valles Caldera. This massive, 14-mile wide depression in the earth's surface was caused by the collapse of the earth's surface following unimaginably violent prehistoric volcanic eruptions.

Our first stop is Jemez Historic Site, a lovely spot in tributary San Diego Canyon that preserves evocative remnants of the Giusewa Pueblo dating back to about 1400 AD. Puebloan ruins are side-by-side with the skeleton of San José de los Jémez Mission, first established in the 1620s.

The site is a testimony to the initially positive, then fractious interaction between ancestors of today's Jemez Pueblo and newcomer Spaniards. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 2012.

After more brief stops to appreciate scenic delights along the Jemez Mountain Trail, the walk of the day is in Bandelier National Monument. Our trail follows the canyon through archeological areas where Ancestral Puebloans may have lived as early as 1050 AD. The Puebloans carved elaborate dwellings in soft volcanic canyon walls, which we pass on our walk. The trail is a pleasing blend of native archeological sights and a lovely, forested canyon, bisected by a babbling brook.

From Bandelier, we follow the scenic byway east to Santa Fe, our home for the next two nights. While our accommodations here are an unpretentious motel, the location, just a 5-minute stroll from Santa Fe's main plaza, could not be better. Enjoy exploring the surroundings for dinner this evening.



#### DAY 3~APRIL 22: Activities in Santa Fe (B)

#### Walk #3: Santa Fe Walk - 5/10 km, rated 1A

Breakfast today is in one of Santa Fe's oldest restaurants, perched, since 1905, on the edge of Santa Fe's picturesque main plaza. The rest of the morning is free to explore this historic city. In 1610, before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, Santa Fe was established as the northern terminus for the Camino Real, a 1600-mile-long "Royal Road of the Interior", which began in Mexico City and served as a critical link to this region during Spain's colonial efforts.

Today, the city is the capital of New Mexico, the country's oldest capital, and celebrated for it's rich historic and cultural diversity, an amalgamation of Native American, Spanish, Mexican, and Anglo-American cultures. We pass many historical sites on today's walk including the Palace of the Governors and the oldest church in the USA.

Santa Fe Food & History Tour: The afternoon is free to further wander the lanes around Santa Fe, or consider joining us for an optional food and history walking tour of Santa Fe. This food, drink, and history experience is a perfect follow-up to your longer walk around town today. A local storyteller fills in many of the gaps, introducing you to some of his favorite culinary establishments on or near the plaza along the way. Estimated price: \$130 per person



#### DAY 4~APRIL 23: Santa Fe to Taos (BL)

Walk #4: Taos Kit Carson Walk - 5 km, rated 2A Driving route: The High Road to Taos State Scenic Byway

After another fun breakfast on Santa Fe Plaza, we point our bus north to join the High Road to Taos Scenic Byway. This byway is another winding stretch of road through more picturesque northern New Mexico panoramas. Yesterday's scenic byway featured native American heritage. Today we wind through an authentic remnant of colonial Old Spain, as evidenced in the religion, architecture, history, and people along the route.

Lovely, old, Spanish adobe churches are a theme of today's drive, and our first stop is at Santuario de Chimayó with its famous El Posito, a hole in the floor of a side chapel filled with healing earth. This Spanish colonial church dates back to 1816, and the area was associated by Puebloan Indians with healing even before the arrival of the Spanish.

Today the church is considered the "Lourdes of America", a significant Roman Catholic pilgrimage site with pilgrims leaving behind crutches and personal testimonies of miraculous healings.

From Chimayó, we wind northward through unforgiving badlands and brown mesas, dotted with scrubby pinon and juniper, the Jemez Mountains looming on the horizon. As we climb above 8,000 feet, the landscape changes to the green of ponderosa pine forests and pastoral scenes of high-altitude farms.

Our last stop before arriving in Taos is a second Spanish colonial church. San Francisco de Asis Mission Church was built between 1772 and 1816 by Franciscan missionaries to serve

Spanish settlers and Native Americans. It is considered an architectural wonder with thick adobe walls and distinctive beehive buttresses and was brought to the attention of the outside world by renowned photographers like Ansel Adams and painters such as Georgia O'Keeffe. It remains an active parish but was also designated a National Historic Landmark in 1970 for both architectural and historic reasons.

Lunch together in Taos precedes our Taos Kit Carson Walk, a pleasant introduction to this place whose Spanish roots, like Santa Fe, pre-date those of East Coast Pilgrim and Puritan founders. Initially established by the Spanish in 1615, Taos ("Place of the Red Willows" in the local Tiwa language) was already the site of a well-developed Pueblo, which we will visit in a couple of days.

Our walk finishes in the busy center of Taos, packed with art galleries and shops, and passes both the home and tomb of fabled frontiersman, Kit Carson, who lived most of his adult life in Taos.

Enjoy a free evening for dinner and wandering from our hotel, located in the center of Taos just a stone's throw from the plaza.



#### DAY 5~APRIL 24: Activities from Taos (BL)

Walk #5: Rio Grande Gorge Walk – 5 km, Rated 1B Driving route: Enchanted Circle State Scenic Byway

Another fun local eatery is the setting for this morning's breakfast before we head out of town for more exploration of bucolic northern New Mexico. Today's scenic byway is a loop drive that circumnavigates New Mexico's tallest mountain, Wheeler Peak, over 13,000 feet above sea level.

The Enchanted Circle State Scenic Byway winds through high-altitude Sangre de Cristo Mountain communities like Eagle Nest and Red River. Our first stop is a surprisingly expansive and moving memorial to Vietnam War veterans established by Victor and Jeanne Westphall in memory of their son, Lt. David Westphall, who died in combat near Con Thien, South Vietnam. The Westphalls owned 900 acres in a stunning mountain setting. They sold all but 5 acres to fund the start of the memorial.

In 1971, it became the first major memorial to what was, at the time, an unpopular war. It was the inspiration for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. and, in 1987, was recognized by the US Congress as a "memorial of national significance". The memorial and it's museum are moving reminders of this 20th century chapter in our history.

Further along the route, we pass the ghost town of Elizabethtown. Looking at this "blinkand-you-miss-it" collection of ruined buildings in Moreno Valley, it's hard to believe it was home to 7000 people during the heyday of the gold rush here in 1870.

Lunch together in Red River, a resort town of less than 600 souls, introduces us to another mining community from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, one that reinvented itself as a ski resort in winter and outdoor sports mecca during summer.

This afternoon's walk of the day is along precipitous Rio Grande Gorge, starting with a stunning stroll over the bridge by the same name. The Rio Grande Gorge Bridge is one of the tallest in the USA, sitting about 600 feet above the famous Rio Grande River, better known as the border between Texas and Mexico.

The evening is free back in Taos to explore and enjoy dinner on your own from our centrally located hotel.



#### DAY 6~APRIL 25: Taos to Albuquerque (BD)

#### Driving route: Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway

Taos Pueblo sits just north of its namesake Spanish town of Taos and is the only actively inhabited Native American community designated as both a National Historic Landmark and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Main buildings have been in place anywhere between 700 and 1000 years, well before the first Spaniards entered northern New Mexico in 1540, and the community is a living community of Tiwa-speaking Taos People.

We tour the grounds with an articulate resident, hearing the story of the Red Willow (Taos) People, a story that intertwines, sometimes tragically, with the arrival of the Spaniards and American settlement.

After free time to explore on our own, we head south on a picturesque, winding road that follows the tree-lined Rio Grande River. We are traveling the Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway, perhaps not as scenic as earlier byways, but ruggedly remote and significant for its mining heritage, including an area in which Puebloan people extracted much of the Southwest's pre-Spanish era turquoise.

After a break for lunch along the Turquoise Trail, we pause for a visit at whimsical Tinkertown, a unique folk art museum established by the late Ross Ward. Mr. Ward began his artistic quest as a teenager carving circus figures. His lifelong collection of wood carvings, miniatures, quirky Americana, and interactive displays fills 22 rooms with Ward's contagious sense of life and humor.

After time to rest and cleanup in our Albuquerque hotel, join us for a fitting Farewell Dinner

at El Pinto Restaurant, one of the Southwest's largest restaurants. The Thomas family began El Pinto as a humble one-room eatery in 1962 with the goal of sharing recipes of the family matriarch. The second generation, twins Jim and John Thomas expanded the concept greatly. The restaurant now sprawls over a labyrinth of rooms and appealing outdoor patios in a wooded area of the lovely North Valley near the Rio Grande River.



#### DAY 7~APRIL 26: Depart from Albuquerque (B)

We part ways with travelers joining us for only Part 1 this morning. Thank you for sharing the multi-textured mosaic of the *Heritage of New Mexico*.

#### Part 2: AVA Convention & Southern New Mexico DAY 1~APRIL 25: Arrive in Albuquerque, New Mexico (D)

Travelers arriving into New Mexico for the AVA Walking Convention join us at our Albuquerque hotel today for 10 days of journeying through southern New Mexico.

Our first activity is a fun Welcome/Farewell dinner at El Pinto Restaurant, one of the Southwest's largest restaurants. The Thomas family began El Pinto as a humble one-room eatery in 1962 with the goal of sharing recipes of the family matriarch. The 2nd generation, twins Jim and John Thomas expanded the concept greatly. The restaurant now sprawls over a labyrinth of rooms and appealing outdoor patios in a wooded area of the lovely North Valley near the Rio Grande River.

DAY 2~APRIL 26: Albuquerque to Silver City (B)

Walk #1: Socorro El Camino Real Walk - 5 km, rated 1A

Our first AVA Convention walk is in the mining town of Socorro. Long before mining because a staple of the New Mexico economy, Socorro played an important role in Spanish settlement of the area and later in relations between the USA and Mexico.

The name, Socorro, means "help" or "aid" in Spanish, and refers to the assistance Spanish explorer Juan de Oñate, and his party, received from the local Piro people in 1598 as they made their way north from Mexico City along what became one of North America's most important trade routes, El Camino Royal – the Royal Road.

Today, Socorro is the home of New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NM Tech), where today's walk begins. The small, friendly, free campus Museum of Mining is a fun way to appreciate the diversity and importance of extracting colorful minerals from New Mexican soil.

From Socorro, our route heads west onto the Plains of San Agustin. Passing through Magdalena, a rustic, sleepy Old West town of under 1000, it's easy to imagine its roots in the mining and cattle industry. In fact, the Magdalena Trail was the last of the great cattle trails. It was used to funnel cattle to the rail yard in Magdalena from ranches throughout western New Mexico and eastern Arizona, from where they were shipped to Midwest markets. To allow ample grazing, these drives could be as wide as 5 to 10 miles in places, and cattle were moved to market this way until the last drive in the USA occurred here in 1971!

Our next stop is a scene straight out of a science-fiction movie (and featured in a number of Hollywood hits). The Very Large Array is a grouping of 27 massive satellite dishes spread out in a "Y" shape on the Plains of San Agustin. The "Y" is 22 miles in diameter and the dishes are synchronized to act as one giant receiver, probing deep space for radio signals. We take a guided tour of the facility and enjoy an award-winning documentary film before returning to the more analog pursuit of traversing the wide open spaces of a sparsely populated New Mexico desert.

Further south, the Catwalk Recreation Area offers a chance to stretch our legs on a short walk up a beautiful little canyon with sturdy catwalks constructed about 20 feet above pristine Whitewater Creek.

Our final destination is Silver City, another New Mexico town with the ambiance of a western mining and ranching community, overlaid, as in many places we've been in the state, with the conspicuous influence of a more recently established artist community.



#### DAY 3~APRIL 27: Silver City to Deming (BD)

Walk #3: Silver City Old West Walk – 5 km, rated 2B Walk #4: City of Rocks Geological Playground Walk – 5 km, rated 2B

This morning's walk explores a number of diverse faces of this 1870s mining town. Silver was discovered here in 1870, and the town became New Mexico's first incorporated community in 1878. Along with ties to notable figures of Old West repute, such as Billy the Kid and Geronimo, Silver City has preserved its historic center. Our walk combines a nature loop through the natural cactus garden of Boston Hill with a stretch through the Big Ditch. A series of floods in the 1890s transformed the town's Main Street into a gorge, now reclaimed as a city park.

Not far south of Silver City is the geological phenomenon of the City of Rocks, a surprising grouping of volcanically uplifted boulders, erupting from the Chihuahuan Desert to form the venue for today's second walk.

We finish our day further south in Deming, originally a railroad hub and today a transportation center along Interstation 10. Our focus this afternoon is the Deming Luna Mimbres Museum, 25,000 square feet of exhibition space also known as the "Smithsonian of the Southwest".

The museum is a remarkable collection of the history of the area, lovingly preserved and displayed by a group of dedicated volunteers in the town's National Guard Armory building, itself listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This is one of the best small-town museums we've seen.

Dinner follows in one of Deming's favorite local eateries just around the corner.



#### DAY 4~APRIL 28: Deming to Las Cruces (B)

Walk #5: Deming Walk - 5 km, rated 1A Walk #6: New Mexico State University Walk - 5 km, rated 1A

Today's first walk features Deming. Visiting the museum yesterday afternoon provides a good perspective to appreciate the salt-of-the-earth working town scenes along this morning's trail.

Our destination today is Las Cruces, base for the biennial walking convention of the American Volkssport Association (AVA) and our home for the next five nights.

Upon arrival, we participate in the first of several local walks offered from Las Cruces, this one featuring New Mexico State University, home of the Aggies.

We await the final schedule from AVA, but it's likely that a Welcome Reception will be offered this evening at the Las Cruces Convention Center, headquarters for convention activities over the next several days and located a 7-minute walk from our hotel. Tonight is also the night to pick up your Convention packets with details of activities offered over the next 5 days.

#### DAY 5~APRIL 29: Activities from Las Cruces (B)

Walk #7: Dripping Springs Natural Area - 5/10 km, rated 2B

Activities over the next several days are centered around a series of local area walks, the

order of which may change. Convention-organized evening activities are likely on at least two evenings. Other activities and no-host dinners will be offered by WAI as the Convention schedule firms up.

Today's main event is the hike at Dripping Springs Natural Area, part of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. We look forward to a route that combines natural areas, such as the Weeping Wall where a natural springs seeps from rock walls, with ruins of historic structures like Van Patten Mountain Camp and Boyd Sanatorium.

Back in Las Cruces, enjoy the afternoon on your own or join us later this evening for a nohost dinner at a fun local eatery.

DAY 6~APRIL 30: Activities from Las Cruces (B)

*Walk #8: El Paso, Texas – 5 km, rated 1A* Option to cross into Juarez, Mexico

From Las Cruces, we drive south, today, to the border town of El Paso, Texas. Two routes are available: the first features El Paso Municipal Rose Garden and historic Manhattan Heights neighborhood, and the second offers a chance to cross over into Mexico and the border town of Juarez.

Back in Las Cruces, the late afternoon is free. Convention organizers hope to offer a lecture this evening by a local historian, giving a rare opportunity to learn more about this southern region of New Mexico.

#### DAY 7~MAY 1: Activities from Las Cruces (B)

Walk #9: White Sands National Park - 5 km, rated 1A

White Sands is a place unique on earth for its white gypsum sand dunes, largest on the planet. The park was first established as a national monument by President Herbert Hoover during the Great Depression in 1933. It covers about 225 square miles in the Tularosa Basin and houses dunes that can reach heights of up to 60 feet. It is one of our newest national parks, achieving that distinction in 2019.

We look forward to experiencing the white sands on a 5 km walk and also from the bus, driving the 8-mile scenic park road.

Interestingly, the national park is completely encircled by White Sands Missile Range, a prominent military testing site since World War II.

Back in Las Cruces, this evening is likely the night for the Convention Awards Gala Dinner at the Convention Center. Stay tuned for more details.

DAY 8~MAY 2: Activities from Las Cruces (B)

#### Walk #10: Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park - 5/11 km, rated 1A

Today's walk takes us west to Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park. Located on the banks of the Rio Grande River, a recurring geographical subtheme of our New Mexico itinerary, this state park offers pleasant riverside trails and is an attraction for bird watchers, designated an "Important Birding Area" by Audubon.

Membership meetings take place back at the Convention Center this afternoon. WAI will likely offer another no-host dinner outing this evening, depending upon the final Convention schedule. Old town Mesilla, near today's walk, has been suggested as a fun place for an evening outing.

#### DAY 9~MAY 3: Las Cruces to Truth or Consequences (BD)

Walk #11: Historic Downtown Las Cruces (Saturday Market) – 5 km, rated 1A Walk #12: Truth or Consequences – 5 km, rated 1A

Saturday is market day in Las Cruces, and today's first walk in Historic Downtown through the Saturday Market is our final activity in Las Cruces before we return north.

We spend the afternoon and evening in the Truth or Consequences area. The odd name of the town does indeed come from the popular 1940s and 1950s game show. In 1950, the show's creator and host, Ralph Edwards, offered to film the 10th anniversary episode of the show in any town willing to change its name to Truth or Consequences. Hot Springs, New Mexico accepted the offer and has forever been changed by that decision.

Edwards developed a unique relationship with the town, returning at least annually on the first weekend of May for the Truth or Consequences Fiesta which started in 1950 and has been running ever since.

Travelers are free to roam the historic center of town where Fiesta activities, music, and food are centered, participate in the Convention walk which explores this small town of 6000 souls, or join us for a very different kind of optional activity.

<u>Optional Spaceport America Excursion</u>: About a 40-minute drive east of town in the Jornada del Muerto desert basin is the first and only purpose-built commercial spaceport in the world, Spaceport America. Virgin Galactic is the brainchild of British entrepreneur Richard Branson and officially opened the spaceport in October 2011. It supports both horizontal and vertical launches, accommodating a variety of spacecraft with a nearly 2-mile-long runway.

Our tour will be led by a local guide intimately familiar with operations. Access to the facility is limited and some aspects of the operation and launch sites will not be visible from our vantage point. Estimated price: \$60 per person, including transport, local guide service, and a tour of some of the facilities.

This evening, we rendezvous for a fun farewell dinner at a local golf resort.

Later this evening, travelers with energy remaining should consider a soothing 1-hour farewell soak in one of the town's famous hot spring baths.



#### DAY 10~MAY 4: Depart from Albuquerque (B)

After an early breakfast, we point the bus northward, paralleling the Camino Real en route to Albuquerque airport. We expect to arrive around 10:30 am and travelers will be able to book flights that depart after 2 pm (but wait for the Adventure Advice email to book your flights).

Thank for joining us for this special exploration of a unique corner of our Southwestern USA, *New Mexico ~ Land of Enchantment*.

# **Before You Book**

#### Click on each heading for more details.

#### How Do I Lock In My Place On This Adventure?

To register, a non-refundable \$300 deposit is required to hold your spot.

A final payment is due 90 days before departure and is non-refundable after the due date. You will receive a prompt email from us 2 to 3 weeks in advance.

Once this tour has a viable number of participants, an "Adventure Advice" email will be sent

with critical information on flight arrangements as well as important steps to take in the months before your trip. <u>Please do not buy your airline tickets</u> until you review this Adventure Advice email.

Please follow this link to read our full General Tour Conditions.

### What's A Classic Curated Tour?

Part 1: Heritage of New Mexico is considered a Classic Curated WAI itinerary.

With help from local experts and walking guides, Classic Curated itineraries are crafted with extensive on-site planning by WAI tour planners.

When planning Classic Curated Tours, our objective is to capture the essence of a destination—the history, culture, and natural wonders unique to that part of the world. We then build activities and walks that take us *inside* these characteristics.

Yes, these tours are educational, but they are also interactive and immersive; walking gets us off the bus and penetrates local cultures to not only see, but also touch, smell, and feel these special spaces.

Along the way, interactions with locals amplify the experience by sharing insights into the magic of that particular location.

In the case of *Heritage of New Mexico*, our 2009 20th year Reunion was based out of Albuquerque and highlighted many of the walks and activities we now feature in *Heritage of New Mexico 2025*. On-site scouting to refresh this itinerary was conducted by WAI guides, Dan and Tim Friesen, in September 2024.

#### What's a Volkssport Tour?

*Part 2: AVA Walking Convention and Southern New Mexico* is considered a **Volkssport** WAI itinerary.

WAI offers walking adventures all over the planet. Most of our adventures are Classic Curated itineraries with walks developed by WAI tour planners in cooperation with local walking guides (see What is a Classic Curated Tour above).

A **Volkssport Tour**, on the other hand, streamlines the tour planning process and focuses more on walks and less on sightseeing. The objective is to feature more walking, offer more volkssport stamps (a record of walks volkswalkers keep in a passport-like walking book), and keep the price lower by eliminating on-site planning. Primary differences between Volkssport Tours compared to Curated Classic Tours include:

- Walks offered are hosted by clubs, not planned by WAI staff. Usually, they are selfguided walks using club-provided maps and directions.
- Itineraries focuses more on local club walks, and less on sightseeing and cultural

activities.

- Itineraries tend to be paced faster, giving us the ability to offer walks in more locales.
- Extensive work is done by in-office, but on-site planning is generally not done by WAI tour planners (experience gained on previous editions of the tour, however, produces improvements to subsequent itineraries).
- Volkssport Tours tend to be limited to the USA. International tours generally follow the Classic Curated model.

In the case of *Part 2: AVA Convention & Southern New Mexico*, the itinerary is built around the biennial walking convention of the American Volkssport Association headquartered in Las Cruces. Walks featured are planned by the AVA committee and not WAI. Evening social activities are also available courtesy of the AVA committee. When possible, WAI-specific activities supplement these AVA Convention walks and activities.

NOTE: Registration for the AVA Convention is not included in the WAI tour price. As information about registration for the AVA Convention becomes available, WAI will advise and prompt travelers who are registered for this WAI tour.

#### Walk Ratings

We generally walk at a pace of 2 to 3 miles per hour. Walks that are oriented more towards education may take longer due to stops for guide commentary. Nature walks, on the other hand, generally continue at a steadier pace because we're stopping less to talk.

In most cases, we are not "strolling." We are walking at a relaxed but steady pace. Your experience will be significantly affected by your level of physical fitness. If not walking regularly at home, we strongly recommend that you make a priority of "training" beforehand to both enjoy the trip and avoid medical issues due to overexertion. If you have questions about your ability to participate, please contact our office at <u>fun@walkingadventures.com</u>.

We have adopted a walk difficulty rating system which contains a numeric indicator for trail incline and an alpha indicator for trail terrain. The explanation for this system is presented on the table below:

#### INCLINE

- 1. Minimal hills or stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: <200 feet.
- 2. Some moderate hills and stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: 200-1000 feet.
- 3. Some significant hill or stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: 1000-2000 feet.

#### TERRAIN

A. Almost entirely on pavement.

B. A significant part of the route is on well-groomed trails with very few obstacles.

C. A significant part of the route is on somewhat difficult terrain (rocky / rooted paths or soft sand).

#### Elevation In New Mexico

Most of New Mexico is consider "high desert". Hotels and walks are situated between 4,000 and 7,000 feet above sea level. On the day we drive the Enchanted Circle from Taos, we will be traveling at elevations above 8,000 feet.

For most people, these elevations do not pose a problem. As always, however, travelers are free to opt out of any activities. And as is the case with all of our Adventures, it is also important that you prepare for the fun by maintaining a good physical fitness routine.

#### Tour Accommodations

Good quality, tourist-class accommodations are the standard for our Adventure. Most accommodations on this tour are selected primarily as a practical base from which to pursue our itinerary. Many, but not all, of our accommodations on this adventure are either single-floor or two-floors, sometimes without elevators. Travelers should be able to carry their luggage up a number of steps to get to a second-floor room if necessary.

#### How Is Airfare Arranged?

The Adventure begins and ends in Albuquerque, New Mexico (airport code ABQ).

We recommend that you contact Laura Pfahler, the travel agent we work with, to help book your flight arrangements. In this age of airfare complications and airport uncertainty, using a travel agent is a good investment!

More details about flight arrangements and travel agent contact information will be provided in an Adventure Advice PDF by email after you register for the Adventure. <u>Please</u> <u>do not book your airfare prior to receiving these flight details from us</u>!

Laura Pfahler: 503.434.6401 or <a href="https://www.statu.com">llp@wtpdx.com</a>

#### Travel Insurance

WAI recommends travel insurance for financial and medical protection from any number of unforeseen circumstances that can arise before departure or during your Adventure. Many travel insurance providers are available for you to consider. Laura Pfahler and Sharon Mitchell of World Travel Inc. can provide travel insurance options for your WAI tour, as well as for your airfare. For those who purchase airfare through Laura, purchasing your travel insurance from her colleague, Sharon Mitchell, may be the simplest option.

Sharon Mitchell: 971-261-2091 or smitchell@wtpdx.com

Be aware that some travel insurance policies contain time-sensitive provisions (i.e. some benefits, such as coverage of pre-existing conditions, are available only if the policy is purchased within a certain number of days of the purchase of the travel package). These time-sensitive provisions are generally measured from the date you make your full, nonrefundable deposit, not the refundable \$100 pre-registration deposit. In addition, remember that airfare is not covered by any travel insurance policy you may have purchased for the tour.

Check out **Insurance Tips** from World Travel for a short introduction to travel insurance.

Other options include:

- Allianz
- Betins
- Travel Guard
- Travel Insured International

Using the **<u>SquareMouth.com</u>** website can be a good way to compare pricing.

NOTE: WAI receives no commission or financial remuneration from World Travel Inc. In addition, WAI bears no responsibility for travel insurance benefits advertised by various credit card companies. If you are relying on this type of benefit for insurance, we advise you to verify coverage types and limits and that your purchase does in fact qualify you for this insurance.

We suggest purchasing from a reputable, well-established insurance company (avoid buying insurance from an unknown company found only online). Travelers interested in purchasing "cancel for any reason" insurance coverage should be careful to check pricing and terms BEFORE they register for a tour. Recent changes in the international travel landscape has caused changes in the policies of some insurance companies, and made the purchase of this particular type of policy even more time-sensitive.

#### What If WAI Cancels The Tour?

Walking Adventures International reserves the right to cancel this tour departure with fewer than 12 participants, in which case registered participants will receive a 100% refund of payments received.

This refund policy contains one exclusion. Many suppliers require non-refundable deposits as a condition of booking services. Though it is rare, unforeseen circumstances can force us to cancel a tour. In cases where supplier's non-refundable policies are imposed, WAI attempts to retrieve as much of these deposits as possible but cannot guarantee a 100% refund.

In cases where full refunds cannot be obtained for a cancelled tour, we will do our best to transfer unrefunded money as traveler credits to be applied to a future tour to that destination.

View our full <u>General Tour Conditions</u> for more details.

#### Wellness Policies for This Tour

Our approach to wellness on tour has traditionally been to encourage travelers to:

- Focus on health before the tour so you start healthy.
- Pace yourself while on tour; travel is inherently stimulating and can produce adrenalin boosts that mask energy drain. Guard your energy reserves and consider the length of the trip and whether to opt out of some activities and/or walks.
- Be self-aware. If you feel yourself tiring or feel a bug coming on, take precautions to block it (e.g. extra rest, extra doses of vitamin C, etc).
- If you feel a bug coming on or if you take ill, distance yourself from others when possible.
- If you feel ill, isolate yourself towards the back of the bus and away from others and please wear a mask.

Click <u>WAI Wellness on Tour Policy</u> to view the WAI policy on Wellness on Tour.

#### What Happens Next?

Once we have a viable number of participants, an "Adventure Advice" email is sent with critical information on flight arrangements as well as important steps to take in the months before your trip. <u>Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review this Adventure</u> <u>Advice email</u>.

A final payment is due 90 days before departure and is non-refundable after the due date. You will receive a prompt email from us a week or two in advance. Please see our <u>General</u> <u>Tour Conditions</u> for the full terms and conditions for participation in this Adventure.

About 2 weeks before departure, you will receive a final email packet with details of the program, including hotel names and contact information, a list of fellow travelers, and a more detailed daily schedule.

Take a few minutes to peruse the enclosed itinerary. New Mexico is one of America's hidden treasures! Few Americans are aware of the multi-diversity of this intriguing corner of the American Southwest.

Join us in Spring 2025 for this unforgettable Walking Adventure program as we experience *New Mexico* ~ *Land of Enchantment* together!





### Adventure Pace

Tour Pace: 1 2 3 4 5 Walk Challenge: 1 2 3 4 5

About Adventure Pace

# Adventure Pace

How much Adventure do you want? Here are a few features to help gauge the

following factors on each tour.

**Tour Pace:** On a scale of 1 (slowest pace) to 5 (fastest pace), we've rated the following factors: number of 1-night hotels; driving miles per day; fullness of schedule; mid-tour airline flights; high elevation setting; and average amount of walking per day.

**Walk Challenge:** This number represents an average walk difficulty rating for the tour using a scale of 1 (easiest) to 5 (hardest).

Contact Us





**Group Size** 

Part 1: 24 travelers maximum Part 2: 30 travelers maximum



#### Accommodations

Strategically located Tourist Class accommodations or better



#### Meals

All breakfasts included with miscellaneous lunches and dinners. Letters BLD indicate which meals are included.



#### Airfare

Not included. Albuquerque International Sunport.(airport code ABQ) is start and finish airport for both Parts 1 and 2..

#### Transportation

Included. We use a motorcoach with a seating capacity of 56 seats.



**Traveler Age** 

Our travelers usually range from 50-75 years of age. All ages welcome!



**Tim Friesen** has been guiding for Walking Adventures since 2003, most often leading our summertime adventures in Europe. Tim recently retired from a long and fruitful career as a high school music teacher in Molalla, Oregon and has been known, on occasion, to burst into song on the trail!

Tim was part of the WAI team that hosted our 20th Anniversary celebration in New Mexico in 2009 and contributed to the on-site scouting trip of the itinerary in September 2024. Tim will be assisted in the *Land of Enchantment* by a lucky, yet-unnamed member of the WAI guide team.!